

Artistic ideas fly free



Simona Bocchi with her artwork

Italian sculptor Simona Bocchi made Udaipur her home six years ago. And over time, traditional Indian arts have entered her creative expressions

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THE ASIAN AGE

Italian sculptor Simona Bocchi came to India some six years ago to showcase her works. But the artist was so awestruck by the country that she decided to stay back for some time. She settled down in Udaipur, Rajasthan and after six years, she thinks of India as her home. Besides shaping her as a person, India also had a great impact on her art, which she is presenting in an upcoming exhibition, "The Process of Unknowing" in the capital.

"Since I was a young girl I had a great attraction for India, as my family had Indian friends and soon I developed the desire to get closer to the Indian traditions and culture. I decided to choose Udaipur as a place to continue my art journey because I could find the materials that I love — marble, bronze, jute. But besides materials, I found the people I could spend my days with. I spent time with the local artisans and learnt techniques and ways to express creativity. The traditional Indian arts were new for me. I let those traditional local techniques enter my style and artistic expressions," says Simona.

And it's not that she has just taken from the country; she has tried to give back whatever she could. She loves spending time with children in the local communities in Udaipur. "While I interact with them, I encourage them to let free their creative mind. I enjoy the energy that comes from playing with them and communicate with them through the common non-verbal language of art," she says.

Her exhibition "The Process of Unknowing" expresses the way the creative process happens, when ideas can enter you freely and without any limitation of expression. "Unlike the state of not knowing, 'unknowing' is my intuitive and ever-changing creative state of wonder and discovery. It is during the 'unknowing' phase that gradually the materials take a shape. And the final form emerges from what in the beginning appears like an absence of form. The materials that you are working with become channels of energy," says Simona, talking about the title of the exhibition and how it came about.

Simona's artistic journey has not been confined to Rajasthan. She has travelled across India to get closer to the artistic heritage of different places. "I have been fascinated by Hampi in Karnataka for its timeless silence. It is a place where your fantasy can fly free. Those majestic stones stand in front of your eyes like magnificent sculptures that can talk to you and transfer to you the knowledge that they have accumulated over centuries. I love the caves of Ajanta and Ellora, a sublime expression of art, a spiritual place where nature has created a suggestive piece of art. I can name Mahabalipuram in Tamil Nadu, with its great monumental complex or Khajuraho in Madhya Pradesh where I was actually a bit disappointed to see that all those statues that I have seen in books and I imagined to be of a big dimension were actually small sculptures," she shares.

